CHAPTER EIGHT

Faith of Our Fathers

A living faith—a faith that literally moved mountains of colonizing problems, mountains of tragedy, sorrow and hardship and yet brought with it mountains of joy—characterized the lives of pioneer settlers in Heber City and Wasatch County.

Theirs was a faith that had spurred them to move from other areas into this new frontier land where they had to wrestle with the soil and the elements for new homes, new farms and a new kind of life. It was a faith, also, that moved them to great spiritual works. They found no established meeting houses, well organized and conveniently operating, when they came. They had to build their own buildings, provide their own leadership and work hard to bring righteousness into their area. This they did, and did it with a determined faith that would not allow them to sacrifice the precious religious heritage that had brought them to this land and that sustained them each day of their lives.

The first group that was organized to come to the valley had an appointed religious leader, Elder William Meeks. All the settlers were Latter-day Saints, and they looked to their spiritual leaders for temporal guidance also.

When Elder Meeks left the valley, William Madison Wall became the area's presiding elder. He served until President Brigham Young ordained Joseph S. Murdock to be bishop of a new ward that was created in Heber City in 1861.

Abram Hatch succeeded Bishop Murdock in 1867 and he served until 1877 when he was called as the first president of the new Wasatch Stake. One of his first acts as stake president was to arrange a special conference at which the Heber Ward was divided into the Heber East and the Heber West Wards.

Main Street was declared the dividing line, and all those east of the street were naturally in the East Ward and those west of Main were in the West Ward.

Even though there were now two wards in Heber City, they continued for a time to hold a joint Sunday School. Sunday School services had been held since 1862 under the direction of Thomas H. Giles, the first Heber Ward superintendent. Others who served in that capacity were John Galligher, Samuel Wing, Henry Clegg, Frederick Giles and William Lindsay.

The first meetings had been held in the log church and school building erected in 1860. A new stone building housed the Sunday Schools in

1866 and finally by 1874 a Social Hall was used. Finally the Stake House was completed in 1887 and Sunday School meetings of the two wards were still held conjointly in the Stake House.

When the two wards were organized in 1877, Thomas Rasband was called to be bishop of the Heber East Ward. He chose John Muir and Harmon Cummings as his counselors. Bishop Rasband served until July 24, 1884, when an accident claimed his life. In the Heber West Ward, William Forman was sustained as the first bishop, with John Crook and George T. Giles as his counselors.

For some time after their organization the two wards continued to hold joint meetings. Sacrament meetings were held Sunday afternoons at 2 p.m. The two bishoprics, each in turn, took charge of the meetings.

The large bell in the belfry of the stake house pealed out every Sabbath at 9:30 a.m. to remind the people of Sunday School and at 1:30 p.m. to remind them that Sacrament meeting was in half-an-hour.

Primary meetings were held in the back room of the Stake House on separate days for each ward. Relief Society meetings were also in the back room on Thursday afternoons. For some time, fast day was observed on the first Thursday of the month, and on this day the brethren would leave their work in the fields to join with the Relief Society sisters in the afternoon for a fast and testimony bearing meeting. Mutual Improvement Association meetings were originally held in the upper room of the old tithing office, and later in the stake house.

No exact information is available as to the year that the tithing office was built. However, it was in full operation by 1888 when James H. Moulton was appointed as Stake Tithing Clerk.

In the early days of the valley the tithing office was an important institution. Practically all of the tithing was paid by Church members in produce, and the office served as a central place for receiving and storing the goods.

The tithing office was built on the east side of Main Street at First North. The block on which the tithing office stood was also purchased by the church for other storage buildings. Sandstone was used to construct the tithing office, which was two stories high. There were two rooms on the ground floor, the main room on the west being used to transact business. The other main floor room was used as an office where groups could meet for any public, private or Church business. There was a large book cupboard in this room which served as a public library for some time. A set of encyclopedias donated to the community by James B. Wilson was the main attraction in the room.

On the second floor of the building there was a large meeting room used by many Church organizations. The basement was a large storage cellar and was divided into bins for potatoes and other vegetables.

North of the office building was a large two story granary. Each



The Wasatch Stake Tithing Office, built in 1888 on Main Street in Heber, was an important building during the years when so much tithing was paid "in kind."

level was divided into bins for storage of different grains. A stairway and also a hand-operated elevator connected the two stories.

A large hay barn and hay shed occupied the east portion of the block. At harvest time it was quite common to have both buildings filled with hay and several stacks of hay in the yard. As many as 15 loads of hay would often be unloaded in a day as conscientious farmers gave their "tenth" to the Lord.

Elder Moulton, the tithing clerk, worked long hours to receive and account for the tithing paid "in kind." He usually opened the office at 7 a.m. and rarely closed before 6 p.m. He had to help with all the unloading and handling of the products. As there was no railroad service, all of the commodities shipped to Salt Lake City or other areas had to go out by wagon. At one time more than 300 bushels of potatoes were shipped from Heber and Wallsburg. The tithing clerk also had to do the painting and repairing of the buildings, and make out all the reports that were sent to the Presiding Bishop's Office in Salt Lake City.

Other tithing clerks who followed Elder Moulton included George Harbour, William Lindsay and Robert Duke.

Some years after the construction of the tithing office a remodeling project was carried out to add a baptismal font in the east room on the main floor. Prior to this the stake had conducted baptismal services once each summer at the Provo River, Spring Creek, the Millpond or some other designated place. The day was always an occasion as families

gathered in their wagons or buggies, on horseback or on foot to participate in the "baptizing day."

Authorities of the stake realized the need for a baptismal font where the ordinance could regularly be performed, and so the facilities were constructed in the tithing office where services were held monthly.

A devastating fire on the grounds and out-buildings surrounding the tithing office broke out during a peaceful night in the fall of 1903, and before the bucket brigade could bring sufficient water to the scene the hay, barns and sheds were destroyed. The brigade saved the tithing office itself, however. This fire virtually brought an end to the payment of tithing "in kind." Farmers were urged to sell their produce and pay their tithes in cash. More adequate baptismal facilities were constructed in the new high school seminary building about this time, also, and the usefulness of the tithing office began to wane. The building was sold to Labon Hylton who converted it into two apartments, and then sold the property to Lowe Ashton who constructed a modern service station on the site.



BISHOP THOMAS RASBAND
first bishop of Heber East Ward.

When Bishop Thomas Rasband of Heber East Ward died Robert S. Duke was called as the new bishop. His counselors were Orson Hicken and Henry Ohlwiler. Bishop Duke served until 1901 when he was ordained a Patriarch of the Wasatch Stake. However, the ward didn't lose Bishop Duke, for his son, Robert Duke became the new bishop, with Orson Hicken and George Wootton as counselors.

In the West Ward, Bishop Forman served until 1885 when he was succeeded by Bishop Henry Clegg. Thomas Hicken Jr. was sustained as the third bishop of the ward in 1894 and served until 1902 when he moved with his family to Raymond, Alberta, Canada. At the time he moved, plans were underway by the stake presidency to dissolve the two Heber Wards and create three new wards, so no new bishop was sustained.

Those who served in leadership capacities in the East and West Wards before the reorganization were as follows: